



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 26, 2011

Dear Senator Menendez,

The undersigned members of the Autism Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) thank you for introducing legislation today to reauthorize the Combating Autism Act (CAA, PL 109-416).

This Combating Autism Act coordinates every available system in order to efficiently and effectively address the needs of individuals with this developmental disability that now affects one percent of the American population. The law focuses on expanding research and coordination at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), increasing awareness and surveillance at the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and expanding the interdisciplinary training of health professionals to identify and support children with ASD and their families. Several provisions of the current CAA will sunset on September 30, 2011.

The congressionally-mandated report prepared by the Office of Autism Research Coordination at the National Institutes of Health, shows that the Combating Autism Act has expanded research and surveillance and addresses the growing need for appropriately trained professionals able to assess, diagnose and support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These vital activities must continue.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of approximately 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

CCD urges you to take the lead in making sure that this legislation moves quickly through Congress. We stand ready to assist you as you undertake this important task. Please contact Kim Musheno (kmusheno@aucd.org) or Katy Neas (kneas@easterseals.com) for more information.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association on Health and Disabilities
American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
American Music Therapy Association
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society
Autism Speaks
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)
Easter Seals
IDEA Infant Toddlers Coordinators Association (ITCA)
Inter-National Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Disability Rights Network
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy